

Highlights of American Cancer Society Annual Meeting, October 26-28, 1960

Analysis of lengthy reports and actions show that two themes of particular interest were prominent at the American Cancer Society's annual meeting in New York City last month:

1. Smoking and health will continue to get major attention by the Society. The outlook is for stepped up activities, with more emphasis on teenagers, adult organizations and doctors.

2. There is deep concern throughout the organization over the "shortage" of money for ACS activities. Public contributions to ACS dropped by some \$2 million in the latest fiscal year. Methods to improve fund-raising efforts drew a lot of attention. Some of these activities will have a direct bearing on the anti-smoking program. Some concern was expressed over research grants.

Each of those themes showed up in a number of decisions made by the ACS board of directors. The board's decisions may serve as a guide to future activities of ACS. Here are the highlights:

Anti-Smoking Programs

1. ACS will seek the establishment of a Presidential Commission to study the tobacco and health question. A resolution calls for this request to reach the White House no later than April 1, 1961.

The Society is seeking the cooperation of several other voluntary health organizations in this move. Among them: The American Heart Association, National Tuberculosis Association, American Public Health Association and the National Health Council. ACS is prepared to go it alone if the other organizations don't join in. The proposal drew little attention in the New York City press.

2. The current ACS anti-smoking program among teenagers will get more emphasis. Many speakers and department reports referred to this effort as the "most successful" and "most widely accepted" program of education ACS has undertaken.

New ACS plans in this area include a "National Youth Conference on Smoking" -- to be held no later than January 1961.

The Society is considering a plan to underwrite the production of a motion picture on smoking for use before school groups, and adults. ACS will guarantee purchase of 300 prints. The school program now includes a film-strip on smoking; some 10,000 strips are in circulation. ACS also plans to issue a revised edition of its booklet, "Teaching About Cancer."

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3. The facts on smoking and health, as ACS sees them, will be made available to the heads of all national advertising agencies. A special communication is planned.

4. A new study on "tobacco connections with non-pulmonary cancers," by Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, ACS director of statistical research, was reviewed for the board. Information in the report is not yet available, but will be made public.

5. A special study group is now working on "tobacco and health" questions, including why people smoke, the effects of smoking, and the effects of quitting.

6. The board endorsed a reported move by the Federal Trade Commission to establish procedures and standards for measuring the "tar and nicotine content" of cigarettes.

Fund Raising Plans

For the first time in ACS history, the Society failed to increase its annual collections from the public. The annual report shows a drop from \$30 million to \$28 million in the 1959-60 fiscal year. Chief reason for the decline was apparently the Society's withdrawal from all United Fund solicitations during the year. (ACS had felt it could collect more operating independently.)

Because of the drop in funds, the ACS research director, Dr. Harry M. Weaver, predicted that Society-backed research projects would be cut by about \$1.1 million (from \$10.1 million budgeted to \$9 million) in the fiscal year ending August 31, 1961. Another result: Staff travel time last year was cut by 20%.

Plans to improve ACS fund-raising activities include:

1. A "special gifts" solicitation among corporations and wealthy individuals. A special list of research projects, each with a price tag, has been prepared. Donors may earmark their funds for a specific research project, enabling the giver to get some identification from the work. One package in the program would permit a sponsor to underwrite a three-year study to evaluate the teenage anti-smoking campaign.

To push this program, 20 ACS staff people are working with local people throughout the country contacting potential donors.

Also, a special newsletter, aimed primarily at business executives, has been developed. A trial issue was recently mailed to all members of the Public Relations Society of America, and perhaps others.

2. An "in-plant" employee education and solicitation program is being tested in Rhode Island and Kansas.

3. ACS plans an image-building program to create greater institutional identification in its competition for public contributions. One step may be an annual TV "spectacular." A committee will be asked to determine cost and feasibility. The proposal calls for the use of well-known talent on an hour-long show. Efforts would be made to tell the ACS story, and to give recognition to volunteers.

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Other Highlights:

1. ACS will name a special technical committee to evaluate and assign a priority to each of "12 areas of research into lung cancer." The areas were unspecified. The priorities would be used as a basis for allocating research funds.
2. The Society will try to enroll a larger number of physicians in local chapters and strive to increase the activity of those now affiliated. About 15,000 of the 200,000 U.S. physicians are affiliated with ACS chapters, it was reported. The Society's "Medical Affairs Newsletter" now goes to 7,000 physicians -- double its circulation a year ago.
3. Conflicts with dissident local chapters and with United Funds are expected to continue. Where bitterness exists between the national organization and local groups or United Funds, efforts will be made to improve the ACS image. There were reports of "acute difficulties" in 15 states.
4. Immunology and its possibilities in the fight against cancer is seen as a fertile field for research and for gaining publicity for ACS. As one medical speaker said: "It has captured the popular imagination." Plans call for a national or international conference of immunologists, and exploitation of the publicity potential of such a gathering.
5. The national organization was criticized for the small size of its contribution to new research grants during the last quarter of the fiscal year. Dr. Harry Weaver, ACS research director, said the national organization contributed only \$79,000 for new research during the quarter. This left \$702,000 worth of approved projects without financial support. (Renewal grants dropped off by \$455,000, or 17 per cent.)
6. The Society will attempt to gain the cooperation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for a nationwide campaign on cervical cancer. This could be a base for future cooperative campaigns on other phases of the cancer problem.
7. A new section for Radio, TV and Special Events has been set up within the Department of Public Education and Information. Other sections are: Press, Magazine and Editorial Services, Special Promotions, Advertising, Special Publications, Graphics and Production. A detailed report on the Department's activities covers 20 pages. The Press section reports distribution of some 450,000 copies of 55 items; development work or assistance on numerous articles. The Magazine section reports development of major articles in 40 leading magazines.
8. ACS personnel and/or an exhibit appeared at 44 national conferences of various organizations. (The Society has nine exhibits, the newest being "Lung Cancer and the Physician," designed for professional meetings.)
9. Dr. John W. Cline, of San Francisco, was elected president of ACS. He is a past president of the American Medical Association, and is an associate professor of surgery at Stanford University.

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